

America's Pastime: How Baseball Went from Hoboken to the World Series

An Honors Thesis (HONR 499)

by

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Abstract

Baseball is known as “America’s Pastime.” Any sports aficionado can spout off facts about the National or American League based on who they support. It is much more difficult to talk about the early days of baseball. Baseball is one of the oldest sports in America, and the 1800s were especially crucial in creating and developing modern baseball. This paper looks at the first sixty years of baseball history, focusing especially on how the World Series came about in 1903 and was set as an annual event by 1905.

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Process Analysis Statement

I watched the first disc of Ken Burns' documentary titled *Baseball* and I was incredibly interested and intrigued about the topic of early baseball history. I wanted to learn more about it. When I was originally planning my thesis, I thought of just doing baseball in the Civil War. However, after talking with my advisor, he suggested I broaden my scope more and focus on a larger time than just the Civil War. We brought up the World Series, and my advisor suggested I focus only on the first World Series of 1903. As a compromise, I decided to look into the first sixty years of baseball, highlighting both the Civil War and the World Series. Once we had settled and agreed on this topic, my advisor pointed me to another professor in a different department who specialized in baseball history so that she could give me a list of sources. She provided plenty of sources for me to use. I searched on my own as well and found even more sources, both primary and secondary. I also became a member of the Society for American Baseball Research (SABR) and from there was able to access archives of *The Sporting News*, which provided me with a number of primary sources. Without becoming a member of the SABR, there was really no way to access *The Sporting News*. My advisor stressed finding and utilizing primary sources (including *The Sporting News*). I thought this would be a challenge, but I used those newspapers, a couple books with quotations, and an autobiography. The biggest challenge I faced while writing was the coronavirus, which impacted my ability to meet in person and gather information from libraries. While researching, I decided to include a section on early potential predecessors of baseball and the disputed date of baseball's origin in America. The paper is then divided into five sections essentially by decade or significance of events. Since baseball is still one of the most popular sports in America today, I ended my paper with a brief look into the future of baseball in between the end of my research and today.

Introduction

It can be difficult to pinpoint the exact origins of baseball. Baseball is one of the oldest sports in America, but it did not always start out being the popular sport that many know and love today. By the time baseball was being organized, the idea of bat-and-ball games were common. In fact, they were so common that there was never even the thought of a sport becoming the pastime of a country. Nevertheless, baseball did become the national pastime, leading to the birth of the modern World Series in 1903 that continues to still occur today.¹

Before discussing baseball, it is important to illuminate a few sports that predated baseball and how they evolved. David Block writes that “Early baseball history remains a vast unfinished canvas.”² With the plethora of bat-and-ball games, it can be difficult to determine which ones are actually baseball. For that reason, it is important to mention multiple similar games that were around for just as long, if not longer, than baseball. When colonists came to America, they brought their games with them. It was not long before there were variations with different names, including “‘town ball,’ ‘barn ball,’ ‘sting ball,’ ‘soak ball,’ ‘stick ball,’ ‘burn ball,’ ‘round ball,’ ‘base,’ and ‘Base Ball.’”³ George Ewing, a soldier at Valley Forge during the Revolutionary War wrote on April 7, 1778, “Exercised in the afternoon in the intervals played at base.”⁴

Baseball evolved from many similar sports in the nineteenth century; the most popular at this time was cricket. Cricket was played on a large field with innings to break up the game and umpires to supervise and officiate. Another game similar to baseball was wicket, which originated in Connecticut around 1830. This was a two-inning game with as many as thirty players per side. Everyone except the pitcher and batter were in the field. One of the most popularly believed origins of baseball was the game of rounders. However, rounders is difficult

to include as the term “cannot be found anywhere in the historical annals of England or the United States before 1828, [while] the term ‘base-ball shows up at least seven times in eighteenth-century writings.’”⁵ Rules for English base-ball were first published in 1796. The Massachusetts game, another variation, was played with a square and ran the four bases with a bat and ball. These and other games had some similarities, including running, the flexibility of the game being able to be played on almost any field, and that runners could be hit with the ball (often called ‘soaking’) to be struck out. These were all adapted and used in baseball.⁶

Another aspect that is just as difficult to determine is when the game of baseball actually originated in the United States. In the early 1900s, Albert G. Spalding, former player and manager of the Chicago White Stockings who later developed his own baseball guides, uniforms, and balls, handpicked a commission to determine the origins of baseball. After years of searching, the Commission came up with a ball that had supposedly belonged to Abner Doubleday. Abner Doubleday had laid out the rules for modern baseball in the summer of 1839 in Cooperstown, New York. He established nine men per team and the force-out. As great of a story as this would be, this is entirely untrue. During the summer of 1839, Doubleday was a student at West Point 150 miles away. In fact, the only known mention of Doubleday and baseball was in 1871 when he was a colonel in Texas and wanted to purchase “baseball implements” for his troops. Abner Graves, the man who owned the Doubleday ball, was known for telling tall tales, but the Commission believed his story anyway.⁷

The other popular origin for baseball is Alexander Cartwright and the New York Knickerbockers. A group of businessmen organized together around 1842 to play a game similar to baseball in Manhattan. Their main purpose for gathering together was for exercise. As Manhattan sprung up and industrialized, these men would play across the river at Elysian Fields

in Hoboken, New Jersey. After three years of these gatherings, the New York Knickerbocker Base Ball club was formally organized and the rules were written down on September 23, 1845. For all intents and purposes, this 1845 date will be the first recording of modern baseball in this thesis.⁸

Baseball's early developments were crucial in shaping how the game is played today. Like most subjects, it is important to look at the past to understand the present. Baseball was greatly shaped in its first sixty years. Through cultural influence, rule changes, teams, and different leagues, baseball spread from the fields of New York City to the far reaches of the globe. These factors culminated in baseball becoming the National Pastime and the championship known as the World Series beginning in 1903. This thesis takes a deeper look into exactly how everything came together to take baseball from Hoboken to the World Series.

Antebellum Baseball- 1846-1860

Baseball before the Civil War was often considered a gentleman's game. As mentioned, it was a way for professional men to get some exercise after sitting in an office all day. In this early period, this sport was never expected to become as popular as it is today. In fact, baseball, also called the New York game because of its place of origin, was not thought to expand outside of New York City. This was due to the aforementioned variations of bat-and-ball games all across the country and world by the middle of the nineteenth century.

The New York Knickerbockers were one of the first organized teams. When they formed their club, there was a restricted member list of forty men with annual dues of five dollars each. Alexander Cartwright had worked with the Knickerbocker Engine Company as a volunteer fireman, and that is how the club got its name. Other teams were formed in the Brooklyn or New York city area as they caught wind of Cartwright's rules. The club advertised the opportunity for

a challenge match against any other team who could play these rules. A team answered the call—the New York Nine. These two teams met at Elysian Fields in Hoboken on June 19, 1846. Cartwright served as umpire, and enforced an immediate six-cent fine for swearing. The New York Nine actually beat the Knickerbockers 23-1. Baseball was officially set in motion to become the game it is today. By 1849, the Knickerbockers were the first team to have an official uniform. It is important to note that the Knickerbockers did not invent baseball; rather, by formally organizing and writing out the rules, they changed baseball to be more of an adults' game instead of a child's game. However, this did not immediately take off among other clubs. After the first game that June day, there were very few (if any) matches with other teams. The commitment that the club saw in 1845 dropped off from 1846 to 1851. Matches with other teams did not occur frequently until 1854.⁹

When Cartwright laid out the rules in 1845, he had twenty rules for his players, where six of those rules were about the players' and club's conduct. The field was made into a diamond-shape with the bases being 90 feet apart at each corner of the diamond with forty-two paces separating first and third base. Pitchers threw the ball underhand forty-five feet away with a running start. Catchers were behind the batter by a few feet, and three of the other fielders were stationed by a base. There was one umpire, who sat at a table along third base, dressed in top hat and coat with tails. He only interfered with a game when there was some conflicting decision. Foul lines were established, each team had nine players, and each game had an equal number of innings with three outs per inning. There were no called balls or strikes. Batters waited for and called the pitch they wanted. If they missed three swings, they struck out. Batters were also out if the ball was caught on the fly or on the first bounce, if they were tagged, or if the base was tagged before they arrived. The practice of soaking players was completely eliminated. Bases

were run counterclockwise, which was opposite from most other bat-and-ball games at the time. The first team to score twenty-one runs was the winner.

In 1857, the game was regulated to nine innings instead of twenty-one runs. That year also officially saw nine men to a side, even though that was already the case. In the early 1850s, the lone officiant was seated between a representative in each team. This system was replaced in 1858 by a lone umpire. Since batters stood around waiting for a pitch they liked, in 1858 the lone umpire was allowed to call strikes on missed good pitches.¹⁰

As mentioned earlier, there were not many games with other teams between 1846 and 1851. Word of mouth or spectators were the most common ways to originally spread this new regulated game. There were occasional other mentions of various versions of the game—for example, Walt Whitman wrote in the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* in July 1846 that “Through the outer parts of Brooklyn, we have observed several parties of youngsters playing ‘base,’ a certain game of ball.”¹¹ However, on December 6, 1856, *Porter’s Spirit of the Times* published the Knickerbocker rules in print. A week later, these rules were printed in the *New York Clipper*. Print helped to increase popularity because it could spread the rules, making the game much more uniform than any other bat-and-ball game. Also in December 1856, the *New York Mercury* first gave the term “National Pastime” to the game of baseball. Since the rules had just been published for the first time that month, this was an example of common newspaper hyperbole. By the end of the year, there were nearly fifty baseball clubs just in the Manhattan area alone.

Early in 1857, the Knickerbockers held the first baseball convention where sixteen teams from Manhattan and Long Island attended. These clubs got together in March, including the Knickerbockers, to form the National Association of Base Ball Players (NABBP). This was the first attempt to regulate the sport through an organization and implement a championship. One of

the most important things that came out of the formation of the NABBP was that baseball was never to become a professional sport where the players received payment.

Baseball fever was beginning to spread, especially in the East Coast. In 1856, *Porter's Spirit of the Times* posted an article that said, "This is truly a national game and is played by the school boys in every country village in New England, as well as in the parks of many of our New England cities..."¹² However, despite this "national" claim, it took two more years for baseball to be established in California, Oregon, and other states west of the Appalachians. The first club established on the West Coast happened in California in 1859.

Baseball was a regulated social activity among clubs. Annual dues were to be paid, and other events in the offseason were arranged. Matches were formal events. Teams wrote a formal challenge to an opposing club. If accepted, the clubs agreed on a more neutral umpire—rather than a favored one—to ensure fairness. The host team also provided a large reception after the match for the visitors who had often traveled a long way. Players, especially pitchers, in this period also began to stretch their roles and boundaries to continue to change the way the game was played. For example, Jim Creighton, one of the earliest stars of the game and the inventor of the fastball, spent the entire winter after the 1859 season throwing an iron ball about the size of a baseball. When spring came and he pitched with a much lighter ball, he threw the ball much faster. Another important development in the antebellum period was the onset of paid admission. The first baseball game that spectators paid admission for was the All-Star game in Brooklyn in July 1858. All of the proceeds for the game were all given to the firemen's fund for orphans and widows.¹³

Civil War and Professional Baseball Beginnings- 1861-1870

Just as baseball was getting into its groove and early popularity, an event shook all aspects of America, including baseball. This event was the bloodiest conflict in America—the Civil War. While baseball did spread during the Civil War, there were also places that no longer played baseball. Before the war, the three most prominent baseball cities were New York, Boston, and Philadelphia.

As men went off to war in the summer of 1861 and as the war dragged on for four gruesome years, there were places where baseball stagnated or completely stopped. In fact, more clubs were permanently disbanded with the war than those that continued playing; but baseball still continued. New York City alone was able to maintain the same level of commitment during the war that it had in the antebellum era. Cheers were even offered prior to a game in 1862 for the brave men who were fighting the Confederacy.

Baseball experienced a period of growth during the Civil War. Baseballs were common in Union soldiers' packs. Both Union and Confederate soldiers played baseball in their spare time, as did enslaved children on Southern plantations. The most common place to see baseball during the Civil War was in the camps. Recreation was permitted between campaigns because it was both useful and a deviation from war. Baseball was listed as one of the approved forms of recreation. New Yorkers and other soldiers from the East Coast introduced the game to many who had never seen it, including those from the Midwest and—in some cases, like prisons—Southern Confederates. Christmas Day 1862 saw the largest crowd ever gathered for a baseball game at the time when forty thousand men witnessed two Union Army teams competing against each other in Hilton Head, South Carolina. Most of the time, however, battle baseball was played within a soldier's regiment.¹⁴

The Civil War was one of the most crucial areas of baseball history. As the game spread, the passion and appeal for cricket and other games diminished for three reasons. First, cricket required level and well-kept playing fields; baseball did not, meaning it was easier to play on uneven battlegrounds. Cricket also was more time-consuming than baseball, making it less ideal between battles. Finally, England sympathized with the Confederacy to maintain the supply of cotton they received. During the Civil War, nationalism swept through the country like a wildfire. Supporting England was equivalent to supporting the Confederacy, and cricket had always been an English game. For the Union, those who enjoyed cricket were synonymous with Anglophiles and non-Americans. At a time when America was divided, one of the best ways to support the North especially was to support baseball.

By war's end, baseball was overtaking the world of sports and the public's opinions. However, there were also changes that occurred in baseball. The biggest change occurred because many of the first players of baseball either fought in the war or retreated from baseball's front lines. Veterans no longer wanted or were able to play the game after the war. Some clubs re-formed in large cities where they had been before the war and spread to smaller towns from there. Baseball as a whole was changed during and immediately after the war. In 1864, umpires were given permission and authority to call balls in addition to determining strikes. This was crucial for a couple of reasons. First, it required baseball to be less of a gentleman's game full of honor because it was no longer the pitcher, batter, and fielders making the calls. Second, this then required the umpire to enter the game as a decision-maker rather than just enforcing civility.¹⁵

The end of the War and the shift of the umpires set the stage for a new kind of baseball: professional baseball. Baseball resumed in the cities where it was popular before the war and

spread to other cities farther inland as well. In 1867, the Washington, D. C., club became the first to travel west of the Alleghenies. Cities all throughout the Midwest and other more inland regions of the country—like Cincinnati, Chicago, and St. Louis—became much more prominent in the realm of baseball as a result. The transition from “the gentleman’s game” to everyone’s game produced new players from all walks of life. Between 1855 and 1870, the composition of baseball players looked something like this: one-fifth had high white-collar jobs, skilled craftsman comprised a third, those with low white-collar jobs made up almost half, and unskilled workers and farmers were incredibly scarce. The men in the positions that did not work as long hours were more likely to be on the ball fields in their spare time. Many teams at this time were formed by men who were employed in the same occupations, like teachers, policemen, or even milkmen. By 1867, the *Spirit of the Times* reported, “Out of all out-door sports, base-ball is that in which the greatest number of our people participate either as players or as spectators...”¹⁶

While the members of the NABBP received the most coverage, they were not the only teams. Teams comprised solely of African Americans date all the way back to the early 1860s, and they were playing against all-white teams within a few years. College students and females also formed their own baseball teams. These other teams caused the men, especially those of the NABBP, to reevaluate what baseball was supposed to exemplify. This caused a shift in the way people thought about baseball. As attitudes and ideals about baseball changed, it also led to a rise in competitiveness. The new, younger players and increased role of umpires contributed to this. A process known as “revolving,” or switching to the team who would provide the best offer, became popular at this time. The NABBP had outlawed paying players, but teams found other ways—namely bribes or minor government positions—to convince players to switch or “revolve” to other teams.¹⁷

After a few troubled years and increasing conflict, the NABBP finally allowed teams to pay their players. Cincinnati was one of the first teams to accept this, and the Red Stockings were the first publicly professional teams in 1869. Today, they are often recognized as the first professional team, even if this might not have been the case. Cincinnati was managed by Harry Wright, who regulated practices, disallowed drinking and tobacco, and made sure they were a worthwhile team. His work paid off. Cincinnati won all nineteen games that first season. The men were well-behaved, and both baseball and the team gained a lot of good publicity.¹⁸ The Red Stockings were also the first team to travel the continent, reaching both Boston and San Francisco in 1869. The capital of baseball shifted from New York to Cincinnati after a victory over Washington, D. C. In 1870, they went on the road again. After more than eighty consecutive wins, Cincinnati's first loss came on June 14, 1870, to the Brooklyn Atlantics. Things were not the same after the loss. The team lost more games, fans stopped coming, and soon, the team was not making enough money. The club was disbanded before the 1870 season had even finished. Even though Cincinnati disbanded that year, their impact was immense. Other teams joined in publicly paying players. Other cities wanted a team to be proud of like Cincinnati was with the Red Stockings in 1869. Honors were beginning to be bestowed as well. For example, the Washington Club sent a letter to former Union General Orville Babcock making him an honorary member of the club. The stage was set for changes to come.¹⁹

Baseball as a Professional Sport- 1871-1889

Professional baseball was officially underway. Teams and players were paid. While some celebrated this newfound approach, others lamented the loss of amateur baseball. The Knickerbockers, the team that more or less started modern baseball, formally withdrew from the NABBP on July 3, 1870.²⁰

On March 17, 1871, a conference in New York City formed the National Association of Professional Base Ball Players, often called the National Association or NA. This was the first professional league. The members included the New York Mutuals, Troy (New York) Haymakers, Philadelphia Athletics, Washington Olympics, Cleveland Forest City, Rockford (Illinois) Forest City, Cincinnati Red Stockings, Fort Wayne (Indiana) Kekiongas, and Chicago White Stockings. Less than two months later, the NA played its first game. Shortly after, Boston joined the league. The Brooklyn Eckfords, named for shipbuilder Henry Eckford, had attended the meeting in March but decided not to join the league because they did not want to pay the admission fees. The Fort Wayne team, Kekiongas—named after the Miami settlement that predated the city—dropped out of the league in the middle of the season, leaving room for Brooklyn to take its place.

Baseball popularity continued to increase. In 1874, Boston Red Stockings and Philadelphia Athletics took the first transoceanic voyage. They traveled to England to demonstrate baseball to the British. The Brits were unimpressed during the fourteen games played in exhibition. They challenged the Americans to seven cricket games. The best English cricket players played against the American baseball players, and the Americans won every game. However, the NA was not to last. Boston had acquired all the best players and won the championship three times between 1872 and 1875. Players drank heavily, purposely lost games to win bets, and revolved from team to team without a strict kind of contract. Very few clubs actually made money and others refused to complete or play their schedules. The NA existed from 1871 to 1876 and saw twenty-five different teams in that time.²¹

William Hulbert, a businessman in Chicago, saw the way the NA was being run and knew it was on the verge of collapse. On February 2, 1876, Hulbert called a meeting with all of

the major league clubs. He proposed that baseball be run like a business with owners in control rather than players. This new league was called the National League of Professional Baseball Clubs (NL). Teams were only be allowed in cities of 75,000 or more, and each club had to pay \$100 in annual dues. Baseball on Sundays, alcohol, and gambling were banned. Like the NA, there were eight original teams: Philadelphia Athletics, Brooklyn Mutuals, Hartford (Connecticut) Dark Blues, Boston Red Caps, Louisville Grays, Cincinnati Red Stockings, Chicago White Stockings, and St. Louis Brown Stockings. Admission prices for games were set at fifty cents. These rules were set in place for specific reasons. Lower-class workers worked on Sundays, could not afford admission, and wanted to drink alcohol at games. By enacting these rules, Hulbert made sure that baseball was for the middle-class and upper-class customers in order to preserve the genteel aspects of the game. Morgan Bulkeley was named the league's first president. Contracts and schedules were written down, agreed upon, and completed. Umpires for the first time were trained to regulate the game. Baseball became both a business and the national sport. Each team played ten games against every other NL team, and the winner of the most games won a championship pennant.²²

Besides the rules mentioned above, there were some rule changes that occurred in the first few years of the National League that are still prevalent in baseball today. The batter's box was introduced in 1874. Henry Chadwick, one of the most famous early sportswriters of the game, created a usable version of a box score in 1876. The rubber core of baseballs had to weigh no more than an ounce by 1877, which lowered runs and scores. Also in 1877, it was stated that a ball had to remain in fair territory to be counted as a hit. In 1882, teams were allowed to wear colored uniforms for the first time. Overhand pitching became legalized in the mid-1880s. The number of balls counting as a walk dwindled. Nine balls meant a walk when the NL was

founded. That number shrunk to seven in 1882. By 1889, it was four balls to a walk. In 1887, a batter could go to first base if he was hit by a pitch. For that year only, four strikes counted as an out rather than three, which was reinstated the very next season.²³

While the NL was the dominant league on the scene, it was not the only one. Some players and cities were not happy with the strict rules set by the NL. Some teams did not comply with these rules and were expelled from the league. The American Association (AA) was the most successful of these leagues, operating from 1882 until 1891. Admission prices were cheaper than the NL; selling alcohol and baseball on Sundays were both permitted. Because of these rules, the NL called the AA “The Beer and Whiskey League.” The American Association was the first to hire umpires. The first interleague championship occurred in 1882 and ended in a tie. Another league was the Union Association. This league only lasted for one year in 1884 and collapsed due to financial issues.²⁴

As baseball’s popularity spread across America, many wanted to share the national game with the world. *The Sporting News*, often called the “Bible of Baseball,” was first published in March 1886. In between the 1888 and 1889 seasons, the Chicago White Stockings and members from seven other NL teams took a world tour to spread baseball. People called it “Spalding’s Australian Base Ball Tour” even though they went to other countries besides Australia. Albert Spalding, the manager of the Chicago White Stockings, was the originator of the trip. Some countries, like Australia, were impressed, while others—Egypt, for example—were not. Upon their return, Mark Twain said, “Baseball is the very symbol, the outward and visible expression of the drive and push and rush and struggle of the raging, tearing, booming nineteenth century.”²⁵ He must have known something because one of the most famous baseball poems, “Casey at the Bat,” written by Ernest L. Thayer, appeared in the *San Francisco Examiner* on June 3, 1888.

Many learned the poem, and it was even made into songs. Baseball, despite its unpopularity in other countries, showed no sign of slowing down in America as the 1880s came to a close.²⁶

The Gay Nineties- 1890-1899

In 1886, H.C. Dodge wrote, “Oh, don’t you remember the game of base-ball we saw twenty years ago played. When contests were true, and the sight free to all, and home-runs in plenty were made?... Now salaried pitchers, who throw the ball curved at padded and masked catchers lame and gate-money music and all seats reserved is all that is left of the game. Oh give us the glorious matches of old, when love of true sport made them great, and not this new-fashioned affair always sold for the boodle they take at the gate.”²⁷ Some people like Dodge lamented the new ways of baseball. Still others loved the way that the game was played. Regardless, by the 1890s, baseball had changed and there was no return to the gentleman’s game it used to be.²⁸

The National League dominated the baseball scene. The Beer and Whiskey League was still working in the new decade. Since 1884, the American Association and National League champions would play each other in postseason matches called the World’s Series. In 1891, both leagues met in Indianapolis and consolidated the leagues, where all the American Association teams were absorbed into the NL. The next day, *The Sporting News* posted that there was “An agreement entered into which should satisfy all parties.”²⁹ In 1890, a third league tried to join the fray. The Players League (PL) was formed in December 1889. That next season, it debuted with eight teams in Boston, Brooklyn, Buffalo, Chicago, Philadelphia, New York, Pittsburgh, and Cleveland. That year, the Players League put their distance between the pitcher’s mound and home plate at fifty-one feet, but this change did not last. The Players League collapsed in December 1890 and all of the league’s players returned to their original teams except for one

Pittsburgh player who was originally with the Philadelphia Phillies. This act earned the Pittsburgh team the nickname of “Pirates”. There was also the Texas League, but that was disbanded after 1892. In 1893, Ban Johnson, a sportswriter for Cincinnati, became president of the Western League, yet another league that had formed to try to combat the monopoly of the NL. He was unhappy with the way the National League was being run. It took him until the end of the decade for the Western League to be a worthwhile contender.³⁰

By this point in history, there were teams all over the country. As leagues came and went, teams did too. Teams changed names and cities, and some teams returned to the same name the other league had used in that city. This was done to gain support by reminding the city’s fans of their history and pride in a previous team. For example, Baltimore had an American Association team from 1883 to 1889. They then had a National League team from 1892 until 1899. Both teams were the Baltimore Orioles. However, the various leagues were not the only places that played. There were hometown teams in addition to teams on college campuses. Connie Mack, a man who spent sixty-six years affiliated with professional baseball in one way or another, said “The country town is the soil in which athletes grow.”³¹ Baseball in small towns was extremely popular and nothing like the National League. A keg of beer often stood at third base as a reward for any player who was able to get there. Fans fought umpires in all leagues. The Gay Nineties was often marked by intimidation and dirty play, notably Baltimore and Cleveland but others as well. The Boston Beaneaters, on the other hand, made baseball more “scientific” by perfecting signaling and place-hitting. They also are credited with starting the hit-and-run.³²

There were many changes to the rules of baseball in the 1890s. Substitutions, which prior to 1891 had been allowed primarily for injury, were permitted to occur at any point in the game. The NL allowed Sunday games to be played starting in 1892. The year 1893 brought about

changes to the field itself. The pitching box was replaced with a twelve by four inch piece of rubber. Due to misreading of handwritten instructions, the distance between home plate and the pitcher's mound was set at 60 feet, 6 inches. In addition, the NL established a best-of-seven playoff series that year. Bats had to be completely round by 1893; foul balls were finally counted as strikes in 1894. A player stealing a base without the ball in play was established in 1898 as well as the first balk rule. This year also saw the first time that stolen bases were recorded as a statistic.³³

Furthermore, championships ended, began, or continued. The best teams played each other to win pennants. In 1891, the last season of the American Association, the Boston Beaneaters (NL) and the Boston Reds (AA) both won their respective league's pennant. These two teams did not play each other that year, meaning there was no championship for the first time since 1883. In 1892, the NL held an intraleague championship for the first time. They divided the season in half, where the winner of the first half played the winner of the second half. This was discarded and revived a few times, but was completely obsolete by the end of the decade. The nineties' championships were dominated by two teams: the Boston Beaneaters and the Baltimore Orioles. Baltimore won three consecutive pennants, but Boston won five in the decade. With the best players, these two teams were practically unbeatable. Other teams who did not do as well lost support, players, and sometimes even the whole franchise.³⁴

The American League and the Modern World Series- 1900-1905

A new league emerged in the twentieth century that provided changes to baseball. The American League shifted baseball by providing a rival to the NL for over a century, stopped the monopoly of the National League, and provided a way to adopt a consistent annual interleague competition.

Ban Johnson—who had taken over the Western League in 1893—had made his league a financial success. In 1899, he changed the name to the American League. He wanted to challenge the powerful National League, but the NL did not think the league would last and ignored him. By 1900, the National League had grown to twelve teams, but the league dropped its four least profitable clubs. Johnson then established teams in Boston, Philadelphia, Washington, and Baltimore, while promising clean baseball—as opposed to the dirty play of the Gay Nineties—in addition to cheaper tickets and family fun. Over a hundred NL players joined this new league. The American League as it is known today was officially founded in 1901.³⁵

The American League wanted to drive the National League out of business. To do that, Johnson had teams placed in cities with popular NL franchises, like New York and Philadelphia. There ended up being eight American League teams in its first year—Philadelphia Athletics, Washington Senators, Baltimore Orioles, Boston Americans (or Red Sox), Cleveland Indians, Detroit Tigers, Chicago White Sox, and Milwaukee Brewers. Baltimore and Milwaukee dropped out, and New York Highlanders and St. Louis Browns replaced them. These new teams, especially in places like Chicago and Boston, revived old names, like the White Stockings (Sox) and Red Stockings (Sox) to encourage support from the NL fans in those cities. Meanwhile, by 1903, the National League teams were the Boston Braves or Beaneaters, Brooklyn Dodgers, Chicago Cubs, Cincinnati Reds, New York Giants, Philadelphia Phillies, Pittsburgh Pirates, and St. Louis Cardinals.³⁶

The American League did better than expected, and seemed to be pulling business away from the powerhouse NL. Cities with two teams (or in New York's case, three because of Brooklyn) were often hostile towards each other. This eased some when the first City Series was played in Philadelphia. Finally, in 1903, the NL called for a peace agreement. This peace

agreement put the AL on equal footing with the NL and called for mutual respect from both leagues. To ensure this respect, a National Baseball Commission was established involving both presidents and a third permanent chairman who was supposed to equalize power between the leagues. This agreement also agreed to play a postseason series with the champions of each league. It was a best-of-nine World's Series, the name taken from the earlier tournament played between the NL and AA.³⁷

By September of the 1903 season, there was no question of who would win each league. Pittsburgh would represent the National League; Boston (Athletics) would represent the American League in the best-of-nine series. The teams met in October to play. The first three games were played in Boston. Pittsburgh won the first, and Boston won the second. On the day of the third game, *The Sporting News* reported that "The fans say that with a fair day that at least 15,000 persons will attend."³⁸ Boston took game three in front of 18,000 fans. Tommy Leach, who played in that World Series as part of the Pittsburgh team, said there was, "Arguing all the time between the teams, between the players and the umpires, and especially between the players and the fans.... [The fans would] pour right out onto the field and argue with the players and the umpires."³⁹ The next four games took place in Pittsburgh. Pittsburgh won the next two games. Then, Boston came back and won the next four and the first World's Series Champions title.⁴⁰

The 1903 World Series had been a success! Baseball had proven to be a prosperous sport in America. People then assumed that it would immediately become an annual event. As the 1904 season progressed, there was talk of the Chicago Colts (later Cubs) and the New York Giants taking a tour reminiscent of the 1888-89 tour later that year, thereby missing the World's Series. In July, John McGraw, the manager of the New York Giants said that his team would not play in the World's Series if they were to win because he believed that the American League was

inferior. After the Giants went on to win the National League pennant, the owner of the team made a statement and said, “The club that won from the clubs that represent the [National League]... in a series of 154 games, is entitled to the honor of champions of the United States, without being called upon to contend with or recognize clubs from minor league towns.”⁴¹ Fans were outraged. A New York newspaper actually created a petition that was signed by 10,000 people to have the Giants play. *The Sporting News* reported that “The signs of the times say there will be no post-season series of games played this year, a fact that is regretted very much by many persons.”⁴² The players themselves wanted to play, but no offer came in time for the championship of the 1904 season. There was no World’s Series in 1904.⁴³

However, talks that had begun in 1904 of a formal World Series was so approved that it was put into place starting in 1905, bringing stability to the series that still exists today. The 1905 World Series saw the New York Giants play the Philadelphia Athletics. This was the only series where every single game was a shut-out. The series was best of five. Games one and three were in Philadelphia, and games two, four, and five were in New York. Philadelphia won game two. New York won games one and three through five. On October 21, 1905, a week after the last game, *The Sporting News* posted, “So-called Giants no longer! Instead we must now call them world champions!”⁴⁴

Conclusion

In its first sixty years, modern baseball, originally from Hoboken, spread across America. This was a result of different leagues, teams, rules, and newspaper and cultural popularity. The biggest shift was probably becoming everyone’s game after starting as a gentlemen’s game. Baseball was greatly changed in its foundational period, and continues to adjust in the present. Baseball was unique because it allowed both the team and the player to be recognized.⁴⁵

There have been many changes in baseball in the past 115 years since the World Series of 1905. Teams have come and gone. Championships have been won and lost. One team finally won the World Series after a drought of 108 years, another team has twenty-seven championships, and still there are six teams that have never won a World Series. Curses, traditions, and superstitions have been both implemented and broken. Today, both the National League and American League have fifteen teams apiece. That is a far cry from both leagues starting with eight teams each over a century ago. In 1997, inter-league play was introduced during the regular season, and not just in the World Series.⁴⁶

Even with all its changes, the essence of baseball has remained the same since the 1840s. Baseball is still both an individual and a team sport, where all nine players work together. Equipment has changed and been added to protect the players; safety is more important now. Umpires are there to make the right judgment calls, and technology is aiding that even more. Baseball is able to be played or watched almost anywhere. However, we can still recite “Casey at the Bat” and be amazed at what these players accomplish on the diamond. Love and loyalty to the National Pastime are what have allowed baseball to remain almost the same sport since the rules were first written down 175 years ago.⁴⁷

Baseball has a long history. This thesis is meant to showcase only a small portion of it. While there have been many changes, there have also been a number of things that have stayed the same throughout all this time. Probably the most important, however, is that baseball remains a game that brings people together. The love of baseball encompasses all people of all ages and all classes. Much like it did in the nineteenth century, baseball has a way of bringing people together to enjoy the game. Some things truly never change at all.

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 16. Dickson, *Baseball's Greatest Quotations*, 163.
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